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MAR 26 1964

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The Fertilizer Situation for 1953-54

Supplemental Report

March, 1954

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Supplemental Report

This supplemental report reflects changes in the 1953-54 fertilizer supply estimates which were contained in the report issued in November, 1953.

The movement of fertilizer materials into trade channels was unusually slow during the period July, 1953 through January, 1954. The drop in fertilizer movement was reported to be more than 25 percent in some areas with an estimated decrease of 12 percent for the industry as a whole, as compared to the corresponding period the previous season.

This slow movement, in many instances, taxed storage capacity to the limit and production of certain materials was curtailed. A combination of several factors caused this condition. Included among them was the extended drought, which affected a great section of the country; also to be considered was the drop in farm income in 1953 and the uncertain outlook for 1954. There was a marked hesitancy on the part of some members of the trade -- as well as users -- to purchase in advance, since ample supplies were expected to be available and any favorable price change would work to their advantage. Improved equipment, which enables farmers to handle large volumes of material in a relatively short period of time, and changing distribution techniques are also influencing the seasonal movement of fertilizer materials.

Storage will continue to be a major problem that warrants further study and consideration.

Beginning in late February the situation gradually changed and by mid-March shipments in many areas exceeded the rate of movement in the spring of 1953.

It is generally felt that the over-all tonnage of fertilizer materials moved into trade channels in 1953-54 may be slightly below the 1952-53 tonnage, but the tonnage of plant nutrients used (due to more concentrated material) may exceed the 1952-53 all-time record. This forecast indicates that the trend toward high analysis material is continuing, and the tonnage of plant nutrients consumed -- rather than that of total material -- more accurately reflects fertilizer usage.

A Fertilizer Staff Report -- Prepared by J. N. Lowe and C. A. Graham, Commodity Stabilization Service, Mobilization Activities Division, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

March, 1954

Total Plant Nutrients

The over-all supply of the three primary plant nutrients will be ample to satisfy demand. As always there will be local shortages of specific materials and, due to the reluctance of users to order in advance of time needed, some may be unable to obtain exactly the kind of fertilizer material desired.

The revised estimate of the quantity of the three primary plant nutrients -- nitrogen, phosphate and potash -- available for agricultural purposes for the 1953-54 season is 6.071 million tons, representing an increase of approximately 2 percent over the 1952-53 total reported deliveries of 5.957 million tons.

Nitrogen (N)

The supply of nitrogen (N) available for fertilizer purposes in 1953-54 is currently estimated to be 1.916 million tons. This estimate is based on July-January production, current rates of production, and probable contribution of synthetic ammonia facilities recently completed and those scheduled for completion during the remainder of the fiscal year. The continuing high level of imports has also been taken into consideration. During the last three years imports have made increasing contributions to the supply of nitrogen available for fertilizer purposes.

The forecast supply represents an increase of approximately 6.2 percent above the 1.804 million tons reported delivered to the trade in 1952-53. Details for 1953-54 are shown in Table 1.

Phosphates (P_2O_5)

The revised 1953-54 estimated supply of phosphates in terms of available phosphoric oxide (P_2O_5) is 2.325 million tons, representing a 12.8 percent decrease from the earlier estimate and 3.7 percent less than the 2.414 million tons reported as available in 1952-53.

Total production of P_2O_5 during the period July-December, 1953 was approximately 4.5 percent below the corresponding period in 1952 due to reasons other than productive capacity. The decrease in production of normal superphosphate accounted for this loss in tonnage. The supply of triple and complex phosphates will exceed the previous year's supply. Details for 1953-54 are shown in Table 2.

Potash (K_2O)

The revised estimated 1953-54 supply of potash available for fertilizer in terms of potassium oxide (K_2O) is 1.830 million tons. This represents a decrease of 4.4 percent from earlier estimates, but is 5.2 percent above

the 1952-53 supply. The revised estimate reflects the probable trade deliveries based on prospective demands rather than actual above-ground supplies. Details for 1953-54 are shown in Table 3.

A report based upon trade deliveries of nitrogen, phosphates, and potash during 1953-54 and a forecast of the 1954-55 supply is scheduled to be issued after the close of the current season.

Table 1. -- NITROGEN*: Estimated 1953-54 Supply for Fertilizer Purposes
United States and Possessions

March, 1954

(In tons of 2,000 pounds nitrogen (N))

Source	: Ammonium Nitrate : All Grades :	: Ammonium Sulfate : Sulfate Nitrate 1/ :	: Ammonium Sulfate & Solids 2/ :	: Other Solids 3/ :	: Natural Organics 4/ :	: Compound Ammoniating Solutions : AN-NH ₃ & UAL : 5/ :	: NH ₃ for Ammoniation : 6/ :	: Ammonia for Direct Application :	Total by Source
<u>U. S. Production</u>									
Synthetic ammonia	285,000	115,000	100,000	--	405,000	70,000	325,000	1,300,000	
By-product ammonia	--	177,000	--	--	--	3,000	--	180,000	
Natural organics	--	--	--	35,000	--	--	--	35,000	
Total	285,000	292,000	100,000	35,000	405,000	73,000	325,000	1,515,000	
<u>Exports</u>	1,000	7,000	11,000	1,000	20,000	--	--	40,000	
Net Domestic Production	284,000	285,000	89,000	34,000	385,000	73,000	325,000	1,475,000	
<u>Imports</u>	180,000	90,000	166,000	5,000	--	--	--	441,000	
Total Supply -									
U. S. & Possessions	464,000	375,000	255,000	39,000	385,000	73,000	325,000	1,916,000	
Percent (increase or decrease) of November, 1953 estimate									- 4.5
Percent (increase or decrease) of 1952-53 supply									/ 6.2

For the purpose of this tabulation, the following groupings have been made:

- 1/ Includes estimated ammonium sulfate content of imported and exported mixed fertilizers.
- 2/ Includes estimated ammonium phosphates, sodium nitrate, urea mixtures, calcium nitrate, cyanamid and nitraphosphates.
- 3/ Estimated nitrogen content of natural organics used in commercial fertilizer.
- 4/ Includes estimated nitrogen content derived from solutions and ammonia in exported ammoniated super-phosphates and mixed fertilizers.
- 5/ Includes compound nitrogen solutions, ammonium nitrate solutions, ammonia liquor and aqua ammonia used for ammoniation.
- 6/ Includes nitrogen solutions and a small quantity of aqua ammonia for direct application

*Revised.

Table 2. -- PHOSPHATE*: Estimated 1953-54 Supply for Fertilizer Purposes
United States and Possessions

March, 1954

(In tons of 2,000 pounds available phosphoric oxide (P_2O_5))

Source	: : Normal : superphosphate :	: : Concentrated : superphosphate :	: : : Other <u>1/</u> :	: : : Total by source :
<u>U. S. Production</u>	1,600,000 <u>2/</u>	500,000	250,000	2,350,000
<u>Exports</u>	53,000	10,000	7,000 <u>3/</u>	70,000
New supply, U. S. production	1,547,000	490,000	243,000	2,280,000
<u>Imports</u>	1,000	1,000	43,000 <u>3/</u>	45,000
Total Supply - U. S. and Possessions	1,548,000	491,000	286,000	2,325,000
Percent (increase or decrease) of November, 1953 estimate				- 12.8
Percent (increase or decrease) of 1952-53 supply				- 3.7

1/ Includes estimates for complex phosphatic materials.

2/ Includes wet-base goods.

3/ Includes P_2O_5 content of prepared phosphatic mixtures, ammonium phosphates and ammoniated superphosphates.

*Revised.

Table 3. -- POTASH*: Estimated 1953-54 Supply for Fertilizer Purposes
United States and Possessions

March, 1954

(In tons of 2,000 pounds potassium oxide (K_2O) content)

Source	:Muriate of : potash :60% and 50% grade:	:Sulfate of potash: : & sulfate of : potash magnesia	: Misc. & by- : Manure: product : Salts: materials <u>1/</u> :	: : :	Total by Source
Deliveries from U. S. production	1,619,000	106,000	1,000	34,000	1,760,000
<u>Exports</u>	40,000	6,000	--	4,000	50,000
Net supply - U. S. production <u>2/</u>	1,579,000	100,000	1,000	30,000	1,710,000
<u>Imports</u>	95,000	15,000	---	10,000	120,000
Total Supply - U. S. and Possessions	1,674,000	115,000	1,000	40,000	1,830,000
Percent (increase or decrease) of November, 1953 estimate					- 4.4
Percent (increase or decrease) of 1952-53 supply					/ 5.2

1/ Includes potash content of oilseed meal and by-product residues used for fertilizer, potassium nitrate and calculated potash content of mixed fertilizers, exported and imported.

2/ Net supply from U. S. production is based on prospective demand rather than capacity of the industry to deliver from domestic production. The above-ground supply is in excess of the figures shown.

*Revised.

